



Michael Omidi

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Co-Founder *Michael Omidi* - Michael Omidi's medical training and patient experience provide daily, real-life examples of the serious consequences of the obesity epidemic in our country. The rising number of people and children who are carrying around extra pounds is staggering and the associated health risks can be devastating. This sad reality represents the genesis of the Children's Obesity Fund, which Michael co-founded with his brother Julian Omidi.

The risk of developing severe medical conditions later in life are well documented and widely recognized. But a recent report from the Children's Hospital of Los Angeles found that the health risks for obese children may be even greater than previously realized. This study found that fat cells may act as a kind of safe harbor for cancer cells. Fat cells may produce a hormone or some kind of fuel that attracts cancer cells, encourages them to grow and multiply, and may also render treatments such as chemotherapy ineffective.



Michael Omidi's Vision for Children's Obesity Fund

According to Dr. Michael Omidi, "we know that it is possible to reverse the threat of certain diseases—type 2 diabetes and heart disease—by addressing the childhood obesity issue. If it is also possible to lower the possibility of leukemia and other cancers by addressing that same problem, then we all need to step up our efforts significantly."

The mission of the Children's Obesity Fund and its cofounders, the Omidi brothers is to bring greater awareness to this life threatening issue and to encourage healthy lifestyle choices for whole families that will result in stronger, happier, and more active kids.

Michael Omidi's tips on preventing childhood obesity

The best way to fight childhood obesity is to prevent it from ever happening in the first place. Just a few proactive, easy lifestyle changes can help your child from ever becoming obese. — Just because your child is not obese today does not mean you don't have to worry about the amount of time they spend exercising or the food types they are consuming. The longer your child is allowed to eat unhealthily and does not exercise regularly, the harder it will be to get your child to stop these unhealthy habits and get back on track.

Michael Omid offers the following suggestions to teach children how to live a healthy lifestyle:

- **Serve food portions recommended by the Food Guide Pyramid for Young Children** - A common mistake parents make is providing large portions of food to their children, these portions often increase as you attempt to satisfy their hunger. Over time these large food portions will cause your child to become obese, and it will become a struggle to get them to eat the correct food portions recommended by the Food Guide Pyramid for Young Children.
- **Promote healthy eating choices** - It's extremely important that you add healthy foods for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Every meal should include fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, lean meats, and fish – and always remember to follow portion recommendations.
- **Make exercising fun for your child** - Exercise should not be considered a chore by your child. As often as possible, participate in fun activities with your children and help them remain active through sports and outdoor activities they enjoy. Limit the time your child spends indoors watching tv, playing video games, or on the computer. Once your child views physical activities as fun, he/she will begin to take part in physical activities on a daily basis.
- **Moderate the amount of junk food your child consumes** - While it is okay to give your children treats from time to time, it should not be something you provide them with on a daily basis. If your child is currently eating junk food on a daily basis, try switching out the junk foods with healthier alternatives such as fruits, vegetables, or other foods that are not high in fat and sugar.

Nutrition

Everyone needs to make thoughtful, healthy food choices.

For a well-balanced meal, prioritize food choices by filling half your plate with fruits and vegetables and the remaining half with whole grains, lean proteins, and low fat dairy. This will influence the children around you to do the same.

Healthy, well-nourished kids are better prepared mentally and physically to take on the day. Good nutrition begins at home, so talk to your children, neighbors and friends, and other kids in your life about making healthy food and beverage choices and model those healthy behaviors yourself. Look for creative and inexpensive ways to celebrate with the kids in your life without using food as a reward. Although adults usually decide what kids eat, we all know that kids eat what is available and what they want. Therefore, surrounding them with healthier options encourages them to make better choices about the foods they eat.



Small changes in five key areas can make a huge difference and add up to real results: eat more fruits and vegetables, reduce the consumption of sugar and fat, eat healthier snacks, reduce portion size, start small, you can always get seconds, and eat together as a family at regularly scheduled times.

Physical Activity

In combination with healthy eating, physical activity is an essential component of a healthy lifestyle.

Physical activity helps control weight, builds lean muscle, supports the development of strong bone, muscle and joints, and decreases the risk of obesity and a range of other health problems. Children need 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity every day to maintain a healthy weight.

To increase physical activity, today's children need safe routes to walk and bike. Parks, playgrounds and community centers where children can safely play are necessary. Activities like sports, dance or fitness programs need to be readily available to every child.



Sixty minutes of activity each day can seem overwhelming to anyone, but it doesn't have to occur at once. It's easy to fit activity into your child's schedule, especially after you identify a few activities that your child enjoys. You can help shape a child's attitudes and behaviors toward physical activity by providing a positive example by leading an active lifestyle yourself. Kids who feel supported by friends and families to become active and are surrounded by others interested in physical activity are more likely to participate. Make physical activity fun!

For more information please visit

<http://www.childrensobesityfund.org/michael-omidi>